

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of providing an answer to ~~answering~~ a question based on information stored on a computer-readable medium comprising ~~the steps of:~~
parsing a the question into a series of syntactic categories;
generating an analyzed question comprising the syntactic categories of the
parsed question ~~including a first identification of a syntactic category assigned to a~~
~~portion of the parsed question;~~
identifying ~~at least one~~ or more predetermined question patterns within the
analyzed question ~~including a second identification of a syntactic category matching the~~
~~first identification of a syntactic category;~~
transforming the one or more identified question patterns into one or more
partially unspecified statements, said transforming including matching each of the
identified question patterns to a set of predetermined transformations corresponding to
said one or more partially unspecified statements, wherein each of the partially
unspecified statements is missing a portion corresponding to an answer and said
predetermined transformations describe syntactic category variations of one or more
terms included in the question;
generating partially unspecified queries corresponding to the partially
unspecified statements; and
determining ~~obtaining~~ one or more answers by matching the partially
unspecified queries to stored information.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the transforming step further comprises:

transforming matched question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements using syntactic frames.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of~~:

collecting the one or more answers from matching the partially unspecified queries across a plurality of documents in the stored information.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of~~:

ranking ~~each obtained~~ the one or more answers according to ~~its~~ their frequency of matching.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the stored information comprises a set of documents and an index identifying which documents within the set of documents contain terms or groups of terms answering the partially unspecified queries.

6.-31. (Canceled)

32. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein said partially unspecified statements include at least one syntactic or morphological restriction.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein generating said partially unspecified queries further includes:

replacing a generic syntactic or morphological category with one or more corresponding elements from the question.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein a first of said partially unspecified statements is transformed into more than one partially unspecified queries in accordance with a mapping of a question word to more than one corresponding partially unspecified term.

35. (Currently Amended) A method of providing an answer to ~~answering~~ a question comprising ~~the steps of~~:

parsing a the question into a series of syntactic categories;

generating an analyzed question comprising the syntactic categories of the parsed question including a first identification of a syntactic category assigned to a portion of the parsed question;

identifying ~~at least one~~ or more predetermined question patterns within the analyzed question ~~including a second identification of a syntactic category matching the first identification of a syntactic category;~~

transforming the one or more identified question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements, said transforming including matching each of the identified question patterns to a set of predetermined transformations corresponding to said one or more partially unspecified statements, wherein each of the partially unspecified statements is missing a portion corresponding to an answer and said predetermined transformations represent affirmative statement patterns corresponding to said one or more matched question patterns;

generating partially unspecified queries corresponding to the partially unspecified statements; and

determining ~~obtaining~~ one or more answers by matching the partially unspecified queries to stored information.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 35, wherein said partially unspecified statements include at least one syntactic or morphological restriction.

37. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium storing a computer program product for providing an answer to ~~answering~~ a question comprising code that:

computer program code for parsing a the question into a series of syntactic categories;

computer program code for generating generates an analyzed question comprising the syntactic categories of the parsed question including a first identification of a syntactic category assigned to a portion of the parsed question;

computer program code for identifying at least one or more predetermined question patterns within the analyzed question including a second identification of a syntactic category matching the first identification of a syntactic category;

computer program code for transforming transforms the one or more identified question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements, ~~said code that transforms~~ including computer program code that matches each of the identified question patterns to a set of predetermined transformations corresponding to said one or more partially unspecified statements, wherein each of the partially unspecified statements is missing a portion corresponding to an answer and said predetermined transformations describe syntactic variations of one or more terms included in the question;

computer program code for generating generates partially unspecified queries corresponding to the partially unspecified statements; and

computer program code for determining obtains answers by matching the partially unspecified queries to stored information.

38. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium computer program product of claim 37, wherein the code that transforms computer program code for transforming the one or more matched question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements, further comprises:

computer program code for transforming code that transforms matched question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements using syntactic frames.

39. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium computer program product of claim 37, further comprising code that:

computer program code for collecting collects answers from matching the partially unspecified queries across a plurality of documents in the stored information.

40. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium computer program product of claim 37, further comprising code that:

computer program code for ranking ranks each obtained the one or more answers according to its their frequency of matching.

41. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium computer program product of claim 37, wherein the stored information comprises a set of documents and an index identifying which documents within the set of documents contain terms or groups of terms answering the partially unspecified queries.

42. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium computer program ~~product~~ of Claim 37, wherein said partially unspecified statements include at least one syntactic or morphological restriction.

43. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium computer program ~~product~~ of Claim 37, wherein said computer program code for generating code that generates said partially unspecified queries further comprises ~~includes code that:~~
computer program code for replacing ~~replaces~~ a generic syntactic or morphological category with one or more corresponding elements from the question.

44. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium computer program ~~product~~ of Claim 37, further comprising computer program code for transforming ~~wherein~~ a first of said partially unspecified statements ~~is transformed~~ into more than one partially unspecified queries in accordance with a mapping of a question word to more than one corresponding partially unspecified term.

45. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium computer program ~~product~~ for providing an answer to answering a question based on information stored on a the computer-readable medium comprising ~~code that:~~
computer program code for parsing a the question into a series of syntactic
categories;

computer program code for generating generates an analyzed question comprising the syntactic categories of the parsed question including a first identification of a syntactic category assigned to a portion of the parsed question;

computer program code for identifying at least one or more predetermined question patterns within the analyzed question including a second identification of a syntactic category matching the first identification of a syntactic category;

computer program code for transforming transforms the one or more identified question patterns into one or more partially unspecified statements, ~~said code that transforms~~ including computer program code that matches each of the identified question patterns to a set of predetermined transformations corresponding to said one or more partially unspecified statements, wherein each of the partially unspecified statements is missing a portion corresponding to an answer and said predetermined transformations are affirmative statement patterns corresponding to said one or more matched question patterns;

computer program code for generating generates partially unspecified queries corresponding to the partially unspecified statements; and

computer program code for determining obtains answers by matching the partially unspecified queries to stored information.

46. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium ~~computer program product~~ of Claim 45, wherein said partially unspecified statements include at least one syntactic or morphological restriction.